



The Circle Newsletter

No 6. April 2006

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians

From the Circle Office

Dear Sisters in the Circle,

Easter greetings from the office of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa!

Circle Newsletters

I need to start by apologising for not producing a newsletter on time in 2005. Hélène Yinda produced the August 2005 Circle Newsletter no. 5 in French which our French-speaking Circle sisters must have received in 2005. At that time we were unable to send out an English or Portuguese version due to lack of funds. Fortunately we have received funding



Circle members at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brasil. "Thursdays in Purple: March across campus in protest against domestic violence". 16/2/06.

Above: Isabel Phiri, Nyambura Njoroge, Mukami McCrum and Esther Mombo

Left: Fulata Moyo & Sarojini Nadar

from the Ecumenical Theological Education Unit of the World Council of Churches, which has made it possible for us to translate the Circle Newsletter no. 5 into English.

I am also grateful for the funding that we received from the EMW that has made it possible for us to produce the Circle Newsletter no. 6 in English, French and Portuguese. Pray with me so that we will get funding for newsletter no. 7.

Apart from the hitch in 2005, I think we have done reasonably well in staying in touch through Circle newsletters. The newsletters keep us connected and it is through them that we can also trace our achievements in the Circle. Long live Circle newsletter! Long live!

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From Addis Ababa (2002) to Yaoundé (2007)

Time is going very fast. It seems like yesterday that we had our Pan-African conference in Addis Ababa in September 2002. We have now started preparing for the next Pan-African Conference that will take place in Cameroon in September 2007. In case you have not received the call for papers for this conference, I have included it in this issue of our newsletter. Please read it, choose an area in which you would like to contribute and begin to do the research so that your paper can be included in the conference publication. We are banking on Circle Chapters to be the forum where the conference papers can be developed so that the versions that are sent to the regional coordinators will not need much editing for publication.

A challenge to all of us who have published an article before is to choose one person who has never published before and to work with that person to prepare a researched article for the conference. Therefore, apart from writing our own article, we will have helped another Circle member to write for publication and to go with us to the conference. This is what the Circle is about: working as a team to reflect theologically on our researched topic for publication.

Circle Chapters should also plan to raise funds for the registration of your team members who will be attending the conference. From the call for papers, you will notice that, apart from contributing an article for publication, each person is also supposed to pay a registration fee of \$25.00. The fees should not be the responsibility of an individual but of the team. If you have more financial resources than others, you could volunteer to sponsor another person.

Circle Draft Constitution

One of the things that we are going to do at the 2007 Pan African conference is to approve our first Circle

constitution. You will remember that, at the Circle's Pan African conference in Addis Ababa in 2002, the Circle leadership was mandated to prepare a constitution. This was done in 2005. The draft was circulated in 3 languages by the regional Circle Coordinators in order to get your feedback. The English-speaking Circle used the 2005 regional conference to scrutinize the draft constitution. If you still have not done so, please send your comments to your regional coordinators. The second revised draft constitution will be sent out again in December 2006 for your final comments. It is the third revised version that will be tabled in 2007 for participants to approve and adopt as the Circle constitution. Please make sure that your voice is included in the shaping of the future of the Circle by participating in the creation of this constitution. If for one reason or another you have not seen the draft constitution, please let your regional research coordinator know.

Election of the Next Circle Leadership

The next Circle leadership team will be elected following the approval of the new constitution. It is important that you read the constitution and familiarize yourselves with the quality of leadership required and with procedures for choosing a leader. Most importantly, we need to start caucusing now about whom we want as our next leaders. The success or failure of the Circle, to a large extent, depends on its team of leaders during any particular period in the Circle history. So please pray about it. Discuss with

others whom you think should be our next leaders. Approach the individuals whom you think can lead to find out if they will be willing to be nominated as possible Circle leaders.

Circle Publications

I am glad to announce that the following Circle documents have been completed:

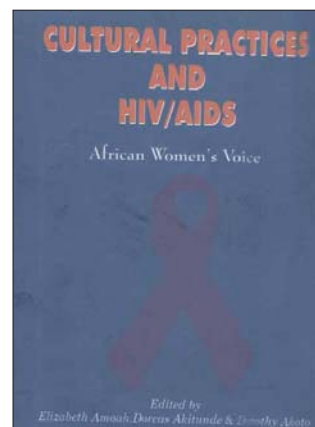
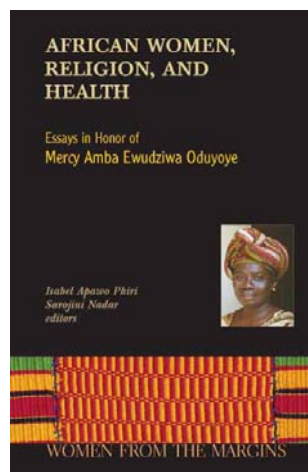
1. Circle Bibliography 2006 by Lilian Siwila
2. Circle Profiles 2006 by Fulata Moyo and Lilian Siwila
3. Circle Directory 2006 by Beverly Haddad

Due to lack of funds we will not be able to send copies of the Circle Bibliography and Circle Profiles to all Circle members. Instead we will post them on the Circle website, which you can find at www.thecirclecawt.org. It is also due to a lack of funding that I am only able to have the website updated once a year.

New Circle Publications

It is a pleasure to inform you that in 2005 and 2006, the following Circle publications came off the press:

- Amoah, A., Akintunde D. and Akoto D. (eds.) *Cultural Practices and HIV/AIDS: African Women's Voices*. (Accra: Sam-Woode, 2005).
- Phiri I.A. and Nadar S. (eds.) *On Being Church: African Women's voices and visions*. (Geneva: WCC, 2005).
- Phiri I.A. and Nadar S. (eds.) *African Women, Religion and Health*:



Essays in honour of Mercy Amba Oduyoye. (Maryknoll/Pietermaritzburg: Orbis/Cluster Publications, 2006).

Still in progress:

- 📖 Hinga T., Kubai A., Mwaura P. and Ayanga H. (eds.) *HIV/AIDS, Women and Religion in Africa.* Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.
- 📖 Yinda H. et Mbuy M-B. *Beya Femmes Africaines et VIH et SIDA: Non, Plus de larmes! Sous la direction de* (Yaoundé: Sherpa).
- 📖 Phiri I. A. and Dube M. (eds.) *The Engendering Theological Curriculum Handbook.* (English) Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.
- 📖 Yinda H. and Ngalula J. *The Engendering Theological Curriculum Handbook* (French)
- 📖 Rakoczy S., Nadar S. and Getman E. (eds.) *Sexuality, Spirituality and Culture in Southern Africa.* Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.
- 📖 2 books from the 2005 Regional Conference.

It is my prayer that by the time we meet at the 2007 Yaoundé Pan-African Conference, we will display at least 10 Circle books published between 2002 and 2007!

The Circle at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brasil

The Circle was well represented at the conference as you can tell from the photos we took. Some of us took part in the pre-assembly women's conference. Esther Mombo and Omega Bula gave presentations at this conference. Genevieve James, a Circle member, attended the pre-assembly youth conference, while Monique Loubassou, also a Circle member, was present at the pre-assembly conference for people with disabilities. The main assembly was



Shannon Clarkson and Letty Russell at the Assembly. They are our link for the Circle Partnership with Yale Divinity School & CIRA.

attended by almost 4,000 people who came in different capacities. I gave a presentation entitled “‘Called to be the One Church’: The Future of Ecumenism: A Protestant Voice’ at one of the plenary sessions. Sarojini Nadar and I gave presentations at the Theological Cafes. Apart from this there were Mutiarôs and theological conversations. Fulata Moyo was one of the leaders for the Zero Tolerance On Violence Against Women; Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Elizabeth Amoah were among the leaders for Transforming the World - Men and Women Together, while Phumzile Zondi provided leadership on workshops that dealt with the church and HIV. I met Musimbi Kanyoro who was very busy with the business meetings. I cannot even begin to describe what Nyambura Njoroge was doing as she is on the staff of the WCC. Because there were so many things happening, I could not keep track of what all the Circle members who were there were doing. So if I have not mentioned your name, it is simply a failure on my part. All I want to say is that this was a great occasion for Circle members to make a contribution at a huge ecumenical gathering. My special thanks go to our sisters and brothers on the staff of WCC who invited us as members of the Circle to make our voices heard. Enjoy the photos of some of the Circle members at the assembly – they will give you some idea of what it was like to be at this assembly!

Circle Partnership with Yale Divinity School and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS

In almost all the past Circle newsletters, there has been an item on the Circle partnership with Yale Divinity School and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS. Ten Circle members have benefited from spending four to nine months at Yale University as Faith Fellows on research that deals with Gender, Faith and HIV/AIDS. These Faith Fellows include Fulata Moyo (Malawi); Sylvia Amisi (Kenya); Vuadi Vibila (Democratic Republic of Congo); Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike (Kenya); Dorothy Ucheaga (Nigeria); Teresa Tinkasimiire (Uganda); Constance Shisanya (Kenya); Isabel Phiri (Malawi); Dorcas Ankitunde (Nigeria) and Hazel Ayanga (Kenya). Although two people who benefited from this programme were PhD students, the original agreement was that this was for post-doctoral Circle members. The initial partnership which was from 2002 to 2005 has come to an end. We are hoping that by the 2007 Yaoundé Pan-African Conference, we will have a publication to showcase the research that we have been conducting in the area of Gender, Faith and HIV and AIDS in Africa.

In 2006 the Circle is entering into a new partnership with CIRA that will involve sending two students per year; they should be registered PhD students who are at the proposal writing stage. While we are waiting for the CIRA proposal to be accepted in the USA, two Circle PhD students will go to CIRA from August to December 2006. They are Lilian Siwila (Zambia) and Bongiwe Dumezweni (South Africa). If this new arrangement is successful, Circle members involved in this partnership will end up with PhDs from the Gender, Religion and Ethics programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Circle Finances

The biggest challenge of my task as general Circle Coordinator has been fund-raising. Our largest and most constant donor has been the Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW). For 2006 we have received •14,000 from EMW. We have applied for funding from Catholics for Pro-choice; Global Ministries of the United Protestant Church in the Netherlands (UPCN); Lutheran World Federation (LWF); World Council of Churches (WCC); Women's Day of Prayer – Germany; Council for World Mission (CWM); Norwegian Church Aid; Methodist Global Ministries; Disciples of Christ Global Ministries; UNAIDS; Ford Foundation etc. In 2005 we received very small amounts of money from some of the donors mentioned above, which made it possible for us to hold the 2005 regional conference. In 2006, we need money for publications listed above and in 2007 we need money for the Pan-African Conference. As Circle members we will contribute to this conference through our registration fees and by taking care of our visas and local transport within our countries. Please pray with me as the Circle fund-raising team takes up the challenge of raising funds for the 2007 conference. Working together with me on the fund-

raising team are Hélène Yinda, Dorcas Akintunde, Felicidade Cherinda, Nyambura Njoroge, Musimbi Kanyoro, Mercy Oduyoye and Pauline Muchina. If anyone else has the potential to raise funds and would like to join this team, please let me know.

Circle-EHAIH Consultation 2-8 July 2006

The English speaking theological consultant of the Ecumenical HIV & AIDS Initiative in Africa, Dr Ezra Chitando has invited the English Speaking section of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians to a joint consultation to be held at Kempton Park Conference Centre, South Africa from 2-8 July 2006. We have agreed to use this forum for preparation for the Circle's 2007 Pan African Conference. Therefore, the theme and sub-themes are the same. It is hoped that 20 Circle members from English Speaking Africa will be invited to present their researched papers at this consultation. The papers will be



Circle members at the 9th Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre: Esther Mombo & Nyambura Njoroge

workshopped in groups to prepare them for publication. It is also hoped that the EHAIH theological consultant for French and Portuguese speaking Africa will organize similar consultations with the French and Portuguese Circles.

I could go on and on because I have lots more to share! However, I will stop here so that we can hear from other Circle members.

I remain yours in the Circle

Isabel Apawo Phiri

General Coordinator: Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians

Call for Papers

Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians 4th Pan African Conference, Yaoundé, Cameroon

1-6 September 2007

All Circle members are invited to contribute a paper for possible publication in books which will be launched at the 2007 Circle Pan African Conference, to be held in Cameroon from 1 (arrival)-6 (departure) September 2007.

The theme of the conference is: ***The Girl Child, African Women, Religion and HIV&AIDS: Gender perspectives.***

This theme will allow the Circle to continue dealing with HIV/AIDS as initiated in August 2002 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the 3rd Pan African Women Theologians conference, whose theme was ***Sex, Stigma and HIV/AIDS: African Women Challenging Religion, Culture and Social Practices.***

The Circle Executive Committee, who form the team of organizers, are expecting articles that will give a religious/biblical/theological reflection on the following sub-themes:

1. Child Marriages
2. Variance in Sexual Relationships
3. Overcoming Violence against

Women and the Girl Child

4. Sexuality
5. HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment Interventions and Care
6. HIV and People with Disabilities
7. Faith Based Organizations and HIV Prevention and Care
8. Trauma: Rape, Care-giving and Coping Mechanism
9. Cross Generational Relationships and the Spread of HIV
10. HIV&AIDS Among Religious Leaders
11. Disclosure, Stigma and Discrimination

12. Theological Institutions and HIV&AIDS

Purpose of the conference

The primary purpose of the conference is to empower women to build capacity to change social, academic and institutional structures that will improve women's lives in Africa.

Format of the conference

Previously, it was a Circle policy that only Circle members who have contributed papers (regardless of the quality of the paper) would attend Circle conferences. This time, the format of the conference has changed as follows:

1. No papers will be read at the conference from Circle members. Instead papers will be selected for publication before the conference.
2. Only Circle members whose papers have been accepted for publication will attend the conference.
3. Invitations will be sent to Non Governmental Organisation and Faith Based Organisation representatives, other organisations and individuals of like mind (e.g. Institute of the Study of the Bible to launch the Tamar Campaign; Population Services International to run a workshop on Cross Generational Relationships and the spread of HIV; The Population Services Council to run a workshop on child marriages and HIV/AIDS in Africa; Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS faith fellows to showcase their research; ANERELA+ to run a workshop on religious leaders and HIV/AIDS; All Africa Conference of Churches to showcase their work on gender and HIV/AIDS; Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiatives in Africa to showcase their work; WYWCA to run a workshop on their work on HIV/AIDS in Africa; Medical doctors to showcase latest research in the prevention and treatment of HIV and African male theologians to dialogue with the Circle on HIV/AIDS research and publication).
4. Circle business meetings will be held where we will celebrate Circle

achievements; adoption of the Circle constitution; election of new Circle office bearers, and drawing up the Circle Action Plan for 2007 to 2012.

Budget

1. Circle members will pay their own registration fee of US\$ 25, visa and local transport.
2. The Conference organisers will raise funds for air-tickets, board and lodging; conference facilities and transportation in the host country.
3. All the invited participants who are not Circle members will cover their own expenses.
4. Contributions are invited from donors who can help to subsidize both Circle and non Circle participants who are unable to raise their own funds for air-tickets, board and lodging; conference facilities and transportation in the host country.

Article writing guideline

1. Cover page:
 - Title that is specific
 - Name(s) in full
 - Full address with contact email
 - Date of submission
2. ½ to 1 page Introduction
Provide the key information about your paper e.g.
 - Brief situation analysis of the location of your paper
 - Goals and objectives
 - Methodologies
 - Main findings
 - Major theological challenge
 - Summary
3. The rest of the paper should be an expansion of the introduction
4. Include subheadings
5. Use the footnotes system. E.g. Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995), p. 5 at the bottom of the page.
6. References: follow the Chicago style: e.g. Oduyoye, Mercy Amba *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995).

7. Use inclusive language
8. Use British English for the English papers
9. The paper should not be more than 5000 words including footnotes and references
10. Use MS Word, point 12, Times New Roman
11. Spell check (UK spelling for the English papers)
12. Deadline for abstracts is July 2006 and the final paper should be in by 31st September 2006.

The articles should be submitted to the following Regional Research Coordinators:

English papers

Dr Dorcas Olubanke AKINTUNDE
Department of Religious Studies
University of Ibadan
Ibadan
Nigeria
Email: dolubanke@yahoo.com

French papers

Dr. Hélène YINDA
16 Ancienne Route
1218 Grand Saconnex
Geneva, Switzerland
Work Tel: (41) 22 929 6053
Home Tel: (41) 22 311 2630
Fax: (41) 22 292 96040
helene.yinda@worldywca.org

Portuguese papers

Rev Felicidade Cherinda
Parklands A25
Park Street
Arcadia 0002
Pretoria, South Africa
Tel: +258-1-720827
Fax: +258-1-720846
E-mail: fcherinda@tvcabo.co.mz

I am looking forward to receiving a positive response from you.

Yours truly in the Circle,

Isabel Apawo Phiri

General Coordinator:
Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians

Postgraduate Study in Gender, Religion and Ethics

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

(Sent by Sarojini Nadar)

Theological [and religious] engagement with gender issues seeks to expose harm and injustices extant in society and which are extended to Scripture and the teachings and practices of church [and religious] cultures.

Musimbi Kanyoro, General Secretary of World YWCA

The Gender, Religion and Ethics Programme is a unique programme which offers a focused study of gender in relation to the study of religions as well as ethics. The Gender, Religion and Ethics Programme is presently jointly based in the School of Religion and Theology and in the School of Philosophy and Ethics. It was launched in 2002, by Prof. Mercy Amba Oduyoye and founded by Prof. Isabel Phiri. The programme aims, among other things:

1. To create a general awareness among faculty and students about issues regarding gender, and the roles that

gender has played in various religious traditions and ethical systems.

2. To engage in a rigorous and academic study of gender theories and their application to the continent of Africa and its religious traditions, through learning the skill of using gender theory for analytical and critical functions.
3. To develop links between grassroots community activism and the academy.

The GRE programme will appeal to:

- ♦ Students who come from religious studies, theology or ethics backgrounds who would like to extend their knowledge of, and engage critically with gender theory in relation to religions and ethics, particularly but not exclusively to the religious traditions of Africa;
- ♦ Students who come out of particular religious traditions and want to study

the links between gender, ethics and religion with a goal of gender-social transformation.

LIMITED SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE, BUT APPLICATION HAS TO BE MADE EARLY.

For more information on the programme please contact the programme director:

Dr. Sarojini Nadar
School of Religion and Theology
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209
Phone: +27 33 260 5192
Fax: +27 33 260 5858
e-mail: nadars@ukzn.ac.za

We offer this programme at Honours, Masters and Doctoral (PhD) levels as detailed in the table below.

	HONOURS*	MASTERS**	PHD
ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTh or BA in Religion or Ethics • Aggregate pass of 65% or more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTh (Hons) or BA (Hons) in Religion or Ethics • Aggregate pass of 65% or more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTh or MA in Religion or Ethics by dissertation only. • Aggregate pass of 65% or more
NO. OF CREDITS	128 C	192C	384C
CORE MODULE	PTH 706 African Women's Theologies (32C)	THEO8CD Gender, Tradition and the Church in Africa (32C)	
COMPULSORY	<p>RELG 701H1P1 Research Methodology in Religion and Theology (16C)</p> <p>RELG702H1 P1 Method and Theory in Religion and Theology (16C)</p> <p>THEO7RPPC Research Project (32C)</p>	<p>THEO8CDPB Coursework Dissertation (128C)</p> <p>NB: Masters students who have not completed RELG 701H1 P1 & RELG702H1 P1, will be required to do these courses as co-requisites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THEO90PB Doctoral Thesis (384C) • Bi-monthly Doctoral seminars
ELECTIVES	Refer to handbook for a range of electives on offer for credits	Refer to handbook for a range of electives on offer for credits	

* Certain Honours and Masters courses may be offered in the Block Release programme. Please consult the programme director before registration for more information regarding this programme.

** Please note that the Masters degree can also be offered through research only, but this option is at the discretion of the programme director.

The LWF Program on Theology in the Life of the Church

(Sent by Nyambura Njoroge)

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to announce that on April 4 the new Website was launched for the theological work related to the LWF program on Theology in the Life of the Church. Check it out at <http://www.luthersem.edu/lwfdiscuss>. (It is co-sponsored with Luther Seminary in the USA and hosted through Fisher's Net. Although the setup is mainly used for online courses, the LWF part of this is open to all to participate at no cost.)

An initial discussion forum has begun around the question: How do you respond theologically to the looming realities of death and injustice? Initial papers posed in relation to this first track include papers by theologians from Denmark, the US, Tanzania and Germany:

- ⇒ "Trinitarian Theology in the Face of Consumerism" (John Hoffmeyer)
- ⇒ "One Body of Hope in the Face of Death and Injustice" (Johanne Stubbe Teglbjaerg)
- ⇒ "Psalms of Lament as Healing/Wholeness Resource for Those Living with HIV and AIDS" (Anastasia Boniface-Malle)
- ⇒ "Hope and Lament in the Face of the Self-Destruction of Life" (Günter Thomas)

You are encouraged to check this out, sign in as a participant (with user name and password), and join in the discussion. Furthermore, let us know of ways you might suggest this become more accessible to others.

Best regards,
Karen Bloomquist,
facilitator for this
discussion

Karen L. Bloomquist
Department for Theology
and Studies
The Lutheran World
Federation
kbl@lutheranworld.org

Announcements from Circle Members

- ◎ **Musa Dube** has left Script College in the USA and is now back home in Botswana working as Associate Professor in New Testament Studies at University of Botswana. Her new major project is the African Bible Commentary, which she is editing with Sarojini Nadar.
- ◎ **Dorcas Omolere Olanrewaju** (nee Olukare) is presently studying at Theological University Kampen (ThUK), Netherlands. She is currently working on "The Ordination of Women in Pentecostal Churches" using Christ Apostolic Church, Nigeria as a case study under the supervision of Dr Lieke Werkman. She intends to do an ethical reflection of the topic since Ethics is her main course of study at the university.
- ◎ **Pauline Muchina** has a new job as senior Women and AIDS advocacy officer at UNAIDS, Washington, DC, USA.
- ◎ **Chiropafadzo Moyo** has completed her PhD studies in Old Testament at the University of Stellenbosch. She has not shared with us yet about her topic of her thesis. Congratulations Dr Moyo!
- ◎ **Madipoane Masenya** was promoted to Associate Professor in Old Testament studies at University of South Africa. She has since returned from her one year sabbatical leave at the South-Bell University in the USA.
- ◎ **Felicidade Cherinda** is now a registered BTh student at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. Congratulations Felicidade!!



Circle members at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brasil: Esther Mombo, Maryann Theuri and Nyambura Njoroge

Background to the Circle

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (hereafter the Circle) was inaugurated in 1989. In the year 2006, the Circle registered 616 members on the continent and abroad, distributed as follows: 465 Anglophone members; 93 Francophone members and 59 Lusophone members. The criterion for membership is the commitment to

research, write and publish on issues affecting African women and women of African descent.

The Circle is the space for women from Africa to do communal theology based on their religious, cultural and social experiences. It draws its membership from women of diverse backgrounds, nationalities, cultures and

religions rooted in African Indigenous Religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. It encompasses indigenous African women and seeks to relate to African women of American, Asiatic, and European origins. These concerned women are engaged in theological dialogue with cultures, religions, sacred writings and oral stories that shape the African context and define the women of this continent.



Circle members at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brasil.

Above: Agnes Abuom, Elizabeth Amoah, Musimbi Kanyoro, Letty Russell & Mercy Oduyoye. Below (Centre) & Right: Isabel Phiri



Mission Statement

The mission of the Circle is to undertake research, writing and publishing on African issues from a women's perspective.

Vision

The vision of the Circle is to empower African women to contribute their critical thinking and analysis to advance current knowledge. Theology, religion and culture are the three chosen foci, which must be used as the framework for Circle research and publications.

Please share with us what is happening in your life and in your Circle Chapter! Send your items to Professor Isabel Phiri or to your regional Research Coordinators. Contact details for *The Circle Newsletter*:

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